871 the general education law in the Mogilevskaya and Baranovicheskaya oblast'. The inspection revealed the far from comforting state of general education in these oblast's. In the majority of the rayons of the oblast's which were inspected the registration of school age children is conducted very carelessly, and in some places registration is utterly absent (the Kamenskiy village soviet of the Kletskiy rayon). The population areas covered by some of the schools are not determined, and for that reason these schools have no responsibility for the registration of children. Also, there is no account of the reasons for long absences and general failure to attend school. It has been determined that merely in the Liakhovicheskiy rayon of the Baranovicheskaya oblast' for unexplained reasons no more than 90 children are being taught. As a result of the surveys, the lowest attendance of schools has been found in the Shklovskiy, Mstislavskiy, Khotimskiy, Novomyshskiy, Ivetskiy, Kletskiy, Bytenskiy, and other rayons. "In every one of these ravons some 100 and more children do not attend school", notes the Uchitel'skaia Gazeta on its pages of October 17th, 1953. More than 200 rayons can be counted in Soviet Belorussia, which means that more than 20,000 children are not attending school.

How can one explain the fact that children leave school for a time and often do not attend it at all? On the other hand, how explain the indulgence on the part of the Soviet authorities towards a population which is not abiding by the law of general education? The reasons are very simple. There are no special funds at the schools for offering help to children in obtaining clothes and footwear, no means are provided for the preparation of hot breakfasts. There are no living quarters for students at the schools, and transportation is not arranged for those living far from school. Soviet authority, with all its severity regarding the execution of its decrees, cannot "oblige" and force the barefooted, poorly dressed and hungry children of kolkhozniks to attend school in rain and in the severe winter weather. Soviet authority has declined to fulfill the obligation decreed in 1918 and confirmed by the Soviet government act of August 14th, 1930, "On general compulsory education". It refuses to offer state assistance to school children. This is why general education is not carried out in the schools.

346 871 /70/ The success of school work depends on many things and to a considerable degree on conditions of training. For successful

training, preservation of the health of students, and for their normal physical development, dry, warm, sunny, spacious classrooms with a sufficient amount of fresh air are necessary. During the war the school buildings in Belorussia were almost completely destroyed. Only ruins remained of large cities. But in smaller towns and villages the school buildings with rare exceptions were preserved at the beginning of the war. Later, however, with the development of partisan warfare in Belorussia, schools, hospitals, restored churches and other public buildings were, at the order of Moscow, completely burned by the partisans. This senseless barbarity caused great damage to the Belorussian people and its younger generation. Schools in villages were of no strategic importance and could not have been used by the Germans for military purposes. Part of the school buildings were destroyed together with the villages in various German maneuvers during the battles with partisans. We have already mentioned that Soviet propaganda claims that what was destroyed by the war has been restored, and that includes schools. Unfortunately, a wide discrepancy exists between Soviet propaganda and reality. The construction of schools in the BSSR is in an intolerable state, and the results of the "peaceful socialist construction" are far from comforting. This is proved by the scanty information which is appearing in the Soviet press. "The fact that the plan for the large-scale construction of school buildings and putting them to use has not been fulfilled year after year, can no longer be tolerated", writes Zviazda of May 31st, this year. One fact which attracts attention is the failure of school construction as a generally Belorussian phenomenon and furthermore an annual, therefore a constant one. It is reported in the paper that "the Polesskaya oblast' did not fulfill the plan for using the means assigned for the construction of schools: 18. 5 per cent in 1950, 23. 5 per cent in 1951, and 39, 3 per cent in 1952. The percentage of "exploitation" of the means for the construction of schools in the Polesskaya oblast' has been constantly decreasing for the last three years. In 1952, 40 per cent of the projected schools were not built. The Polesskaya oblast' is no exception: schools are not being built in the Molodechinskaya, Bobruiskaya, Vitebskaya or Polotskaya oblast's either. In the Polotskaya oblast' "of the two million rubles released by the government for the planned construction of schools, only 30 per cent has been used". The paper Zviazda of June 3rd of this

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year notes that 466 thousand rubles were assigned for the construction of the Vetrinskaya school in the Polotskaya oblast', but only 195,000 rubles have been used so far, and that not advantageously. Unsuitable brick was supplied, which was used in the building of walls. When the builders noticed it, 25,000 bricks had to be torn down and new bricks used for rebuilding the walls. In this way at least 35 to 40 per cent of the means annually assigned for building schools is not used. This means that it is not enough to have Soviet rubles in store: school buildings must be assured of labor power and building material. And the schools are the last of all to receive these advantages. Financial means, labor power and building material are first assigned to constructions of military significance, as the Soviet rulers know very well.

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Apart from the state constructions, there exists in villages the so-called "method of the people's construction". This method is very simple. Beside many other economic campaigns the kolkhozniks /71/ of a rayon are bound to build with their own efforts and means several schools, clubs, reading rooms, bridges, etc. The paper Zviazda quotes as an example the Sharkovskiy rayon in the Polotskaya oblast', which accepted the obligation to build at the beginning of the school year, by the "method of the people's construction", five seven-grade and one elementary School, to expand the school capacity to one thousand student seats, carry out thorough repairs in six schools and less general repairs in forty-two schools. We have no information as to the way the kolkhozniks of the Sharkovskiy rayon fulfilled this colossal program. If with a budget of hundreds of thousand of rubles and with building material and labor power at the disposal of the rayon executive committees the building of schools goes on for several years, one wonders whether kolkhozniks with the "method of the people's construction" will be able to enrich the rayon at their own cost with six new seven-grade schools, expand the school capacity to one thousand seats, and repair all the schools in the rayon. Judging by the pace of the work in constructing schools, Belorussian children will have to study reading and writing in inadequate, cold, restricted schoolrooms for many years to come.

The Soviet authority has assigned the fuel supply and maintenance of schools in country localities to the local population. In the usual confusion and without any organization or building material, schools are not being repaired and are deteriorating. In a number of rayons,

according to the reports of the newspapers, preparation and delivery [346] of fuel for schools had not started even in August, shortly before the 871 beginning of the school year.

The success of training in schools is also conditioned by prompt and sufficient provision of students with textbooks, instruments, writing accessories, well equipped and completed physical, chemical and biological school laboratories and libraries. Several Soviet organizations, independent of each other, are engaged in providing students with textbooks in the BSSR. For this reason the textbooks, instruments and writing acessories have to travel a long way before they reach school shelves or bookstores.

"Books are left lying for a long time at the editor's and proof- [214] reader's in the publishing house, they are held up even at the typesetter's. Almost-finished products lie for two and more months at the sewing and binding establishments. All this means that the established norm for the work on textbooks is not fullfilled from one month to another... A considerable number of textbooks is held up because of the shortage of maps and the unsatisfactory organization of the productive process of publication and typography. Books concerned with methodology are being published particularly slowly: Out of 46 such titles which were planned, only 5 have been printed." (Zviazda of May 21st, current year).

Colossal sums are being expended for the printing of various propaganda material, as well as publications designed for foreign countries. This material is made up with special care and luxury. The appearance of the textbooks designed for Soviet schoolchildren is quite different.

"Textbooks are printed on poor paper, covers are smeared with printer's ink. The work of the sewing and binding divisions of the printing press is of a particularly low quality. Many books, even if they are most carefully treated, soon break and fall apart." (Zviazda, April 25th of this year). /72/

The most indispensable tools and products are absent from the school laboratories. The laboratories of provincial and country schools are especially poor. The teaching of physics, chemistry and natural sciences is reduced to a study without experiments and examples. The situation of the school libraries is no better: they are mostly oversupplied with Soviet political literature, while the classics are unavailable. School furniture consists of an assortment of local handicraft production, it is not standardized and not hygienic.